



Volume 7  
Fall, 2008

# Patient Information Guide

## Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic



Welcome to the Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic (OPC). This guide contains helpful information about the Fort Myers OPC and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) in Naples, Port Charlotte, and Sebring.

Thank you for choosing the VA for your healthcare. Our goal is to provide our veterans with the highest quality healthcare. You have served and protected our country with courage and honor, and we are proud to serve you now.

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## Welcome

The Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic (OPC) has been providing care to veterans living in southwest Florida since 1978. It is part of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) located at Bay Pines, FL. The Bay Pines VAHCS provides healthcare and physical, emotional, and psychological support to over 4,000 veterans every day. During fiscal year 2007, the Bay Pines VAHCS treated over 94,000 veterans.

## Mission, Vision, and Values

The Bay Pines VAHCS Mission, Vision, and Values guide our actions and choices. We strive to be an excellent and caring healthcare community in which people are valued, trusted, and respected.

**Mission:** To honor America's veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well being.

**Vision:** To be a patient centered integrated healthcare organization for veterans, providing excellence in healthcare, research and education, an organization where people choose to work, an active community partner, and a back-up for national emergencies.

**Core Values:** Trust, Respect, Excellence, Compassion, Commitment

## General Information

### Website for the Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic (OPC)

[www.baypines.va.gov](http://www.baypines.va.gov)

Click on the Fort Myers OPC link in the column on the right.

### Telephone and Fax Numbers for the Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic

Within Lee County: (239) 939-3939

Outside of Lee County: (888) 513-0045 (toll-free)

Fort Myers OPC after hours: (877) 741-3400 (toll-free)

Administration Office fax number: (239) 931-6114

## **Addresses**

### **Fort Myers VA Outpatient Clinic**

3033 Winkler Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33916

### **Naples CBOC**

2685 Horseshoe Drive South, Suite 101  
Naples, FL 34104  
(239) 659-9188

### **Port Charlotte CBOC**

4161 Tamiami Trail, Unit 4  
Port Charlotte, FL 33952  
(941) 235-2710

### **Sebring CBOC**

3760 U.S. Highway 27 South  
Sebring, FL 33870  
(863) 471-6227

### **Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS)**

10000 Bay Pines Blvd.  
Bay Pines, FL 33744-5005  
(727) 398-6661  
Toll-free: (888) 820-0230

## **Directions from Fort Myers OPC to the Bay Pines VAHCS**

Take Interstate 75 North to Interstate 275 North to Exit 25 (38th Avenue North). Travel west five miles to Tyrone Blvd. (ALT US 19A). Turn right (west) on Tyrone Blvd. and travel toward the beaches. Turn left at the third traffic light to enter the facility.

## **Hours of Operation**

### **Fort Myers VA Outpatient Clinic**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Tuesday: 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### **VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's)**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Tuesday: 8:45 to 4:30 p.m.

## Holidays

Appointments are not scheduled on the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

## The Joint Commission

The Bay Pines VAHCS and its clinics are accredited by the Joint Commission. They are regularly reviewed to make sure they comply with national Joint Commission standards on safety, quality of patient care, and environmental issues. If you have a concern, you may contact the Joint Commission by telephone, mail, fax, or e-mail.

Division of Accreditation Operations  
Office of Quality Monitoring  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Telephone: (800) 994-6610  
Fax: (630) 792-5636  
E-mail: [complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org)  
Website: [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)

## Your Safety

You may have concerns about your patient care and safety, such as:

- You think you may have received the wrong medication.
- You think the staff may have confused you with another patient.
- You notice that your caregivers have not washed their hands or used alcohol gel before providing care to you.
- Something just does not seem right to you.

If you have any of these concerns, you should report them to:

- Any supervisor, service chief, or other management official at the Fort Myers OPC, CBOC's, or the main campus of the Bay Pines VAHCS
- The Bay Pines VAHCS Quality Systems at (888) 820-0230, ext. 4121

- Bay Pines Safety Hotline at (727) 319-1355
- The Joint Commission

## **PATIENT AND NURSING HOME RESIDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **(Patient and Community Living Center Resident Rights and Responsibilities)**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your healthcare. We want to improve your health and well-being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. As part of our service to you, to other veterans and to the nation, we are committed to improving healthcare quality. We also train future healthcare professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency. In all of these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a patient. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

#### **I. Respect and Nondiscrimination**

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any VA held funds.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, the use of medication and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you may wear your own clothes. You may keep personal items. This will depend on your medical condition.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you have the right to social interaction and regular exercise. You will have the opportunity for religious worship and spiritual support. You may decide whether to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the Medical Center.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You

will have access to public telephones. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.

- As a nursing home resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the facility. Your family also can meet with the families of other residents.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and residents and staff, you are expected to respect other patients, residents and staff, and to follow the facility's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

## **II. Information Disclosure and Confidentiality**

- You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.
- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (an example of this is State public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and you may request a copy of your medical records. This will be provided except in rare situations when your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that case, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your VA provider.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any potential injuries. You will be informed about how to request compensation for any injuries.

## **III. Participation in Treatment Decisions**

- You, and any persons you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the possible results to your health.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over-the-counter and herbals), and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you do not understand something about your care. Being involved is very important for you to get the best possible results.

- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. As our partner in healthcare, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. This includes students, residents and trainees. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.
- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient or resident. This includes your participation in decision making and care at the end of life.
- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to notify your provider or treatment team.
- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You have the right to choose whether you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service and/or other staff knowledgeable about healthcare ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

#### **IV. Complaints**

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

## **Your Clinic Visit**

### **Appointments**

We want to make it easy for you to get your healthcare at a time that is convenient for you. To do this, we will mail you a reminder two weeks before your next follow-up appointment is due. This notice will be in the form of a sealed post-card or letter. It will tell you when your next

appointment is or that it is time to make your appointment. It is important that we have your current address so you will receive these reminders.

Our goal is to see you at your scheduled appointment time. This may not always be possible, but we will try not to keep you waiting for more than thirty minutes. To help reach this goal:

- Do not come in to be seen without an appointment.
- Be on time for your appointment. If you will be late or if you have to cancel, please call the Scheduling Desk at (239) 939-3939 or toll-free (888) 513-0045, ext. 3050.
- Come earlier if you have lab work or other medical tests scheduled.
- Follow any fasting or special instructions given to you.
- Do not be a "no-show!" If you cannot keep your appointment, let us know as soon as possible so that we can give you a new appointment and give another veteran your original appointment time.

Things to bring with you:

- All medical records, reports, labs, or test results from another facility or from a non-VA provider
- All bottles of medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, food supplements, or herbal remedies
- Your Advance Directive if it is not on file or if it has been changed
- A list of questions and medical problems to discuss with your provider
- Your blood pressure or blood sugar readings, if you have them
- Your health insurance information
- Two forms of identification, such as your VA Identification Card, Social Security card, or driver's license to verify who you are

## **Healthy Living and Calendars**

Prevention is the key to healthy living. The *Healthy Living* pamphlet and the VISN 8 "Salute to Our Veterans" calendar have valuable information on nutrition, diabetes, exercise, blood pressure, and more. Ask your VA provider for a copy.

## **Immunizations**

Each year in the U.S. over 40,000 people die from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications. The Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention and the American College of Physicians recommend these immunizations for adults:

- **Flu:** Adults over 50 (especially those older than 65) should get a flu shot every year. It can prevent over 50% of hospitalizations and 80% of deaths from influenza-related complications. Flu shots are given October through March.
- **Pneumonia:** Adults (especially those older than 65) should get this shot every five years. It is over 60% effective preventing pneumonia.
- **Tetanus:** Adults should get a booster shot every ten years. People know they need a tetanus shot if they step on a rusty nail, but they can also get tetanus other ways, such as by puncture wounds of any kind.
- **Diphtheria:** Immunization against this bacterial infection usually is given with the tetanus-pertussis vaccine. Adults should be vaccinated against this and need a booster shot every ten years.
- **Hepatitis:** There is a safe and effective vaccine for Hepatitis A and B infectious liver diseases. Hepatitis A can be spread by people, drinking water, or eating shellfish infected with the virus. If you eat shellfish, or if you are an older adult traveling abroad, it is recommended that you get the Hepatitis A vaccine.

## **Pain: The Fifth Vital Sign**

When you come for an exam, your healthcare provider will check your five vital signs: blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respiration, and **pain**. You have the right to receive treatment for pain. Treatment means relieving, controlling, and managing your pain.

Pain scale from 0 to 10:

“0” = no pain;

“10” = worst pain imaginable

You will be asked the following questions about your pain:

- **Where** is it?
- **When** did it start?
- **How long** has it lasted or does it last?
- **What** makes it better or worse?
- **Which medications** have you tried?
- **Have any treatments** worked well?

There are many ways to control or treat your pain. Some of these are:

- **Home remedies:** heat, ice, elevation, rest
- **Stretching and exercise:** physical and occupational therapies
- **Medication:** the kind prescribed depends on the type and degree of pain
- **Invasive therapies:** surgery, blocks, and/or injections
- **Non-invasive therapies:** massage, acupuncture, biofeedback, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). TENS is a device that uses electricity to block pain signals going to the brain.

When you are treated for pain:

- Give an accurate report of your health history, including high blood pressure, ulcers, heart, kidney, liver problems, etc.
- Report any side effects to drugs, such as allergies or reactions.
- Report all medicines you are now taking, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and nutritional and herbal supplements.
- Take medicines as prescribed.
- When you take your pain medicine, check with your provider first to see if it is all right for you to drink alcohol or use other drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Do not drive if your medicine makes you drowsy.

## **Primary Care and Primary Care Providers**

Primary Care allows you to identify one physician and team responsible for serving all of your healthcare needs. This coordinated effort will help you stay healthy and have a better quality of life. A Primary Care Provider can be a physician, nurse practitioner, or a physician's assistant. A Primary Care Team is a group of healthcare professionals who will coordinate your care. You will be assigned a Primary Care Provider and Team.

Can you get medicines at the VA which are prescribed by a non-VA/private physician?

No. Prescription medications require monitoring and evaluation for effectiveness, side effects, and potential interactions with your other medicines. If our provider writes you a prescription, that provider is responsible for the effects of that medicine. Your provider needs to see you regularly to monitor your health and to write your

prescriptions. In order to get your medicines at the VA, your primary healthcare must be monitored by the VA.

Can you get primary care here and see a non-VA/private physician?

Yes. However, we discourage you from doing this. It is best if your Primary Care Team coordinates your care and medications. If you do see a private physician, you need to bring copies of your health records every time you have an appointment at a VA facility.

Will you be able to get the same medicines you received from your non-VA/private physician?

*Possibly.* During your first visit here, your medicines will be reviewed, including any over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin or cold tablets. Your VA physician or pharmacist will decide if there is a suitable alternative from the VA Pharmacy if we do not have the same medicines you were receiving from your private physician.

## Advance Directives

An Advance Directive is a set of legal forms you fill out and sign to let others know about your healthcare wishes when you cannot speak for yourself. If you are not able to make your own decisions, a healthcare surrogate chosen by you can make them on your behalf. Your healthcare surrogate and Advance Directive forms will let your Primary Care Team know how you feel about:

- Being brought back to life if your breathing or heart stops
- Having a machine breathe for you
- Being tube-fed
- Receiving donated blood

There are two types of forms used to make an Advance Directive. These are the **Living Will** and the **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare** (Surrogate Decision Maker).

**Living Wills** are documents stating your healthcare choices when you are unable to make decisions for yourself. This form meets Florida's legal requirements. You can change your Living Will any time. If you already have a Living Will, make sure it still meets your wishes.

**Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare** allows you to choose someone else to make decisions about your healthcare if you cannot make these decisions for yourself. This lets your Primary Care Team know who is responsible for making these decisions and how to contact them. Make sure this person knows your wishes! That person may have to make a life or death decision about your care.

Your nurse, social worker, chaplain, or member of your Primary Care Team can provide you with these forms. You do not need a lawyer to complete the forms. Two people must witness your signature when you sign the forms. The forms state who can be your witnesses. After filling out the forms, give copies to your Primary Care Team and your surrogate. A copy will be placed in your medical records. Keep the original for your records.

It is very important that your Primary Care Team knows your wishes. It is your right to accept or refuse medical care. You can change your mind at any time about your decisions for treatment, but let us know if you do. You may also have your Advance Directive prepared by a non-VA source. If you do, please bring a copy with you for your VA medical records.

Remember:

- You can choose to be treated for one illness and not another if you have more than one health problem.
- You can always change your mind about any of your decisions.
- Talk to any member of your Primary Care Team or your social worker for more information on Advance Directives.

Have you thought about these other questions?

- Are your legal affairs in order?
- Have you prepared a will?
- Does your family know where your important papers are kept?
- Do you need to make a plan for your spouse or family's care?
- How do you feel about organ or tissue donations?
- How and where do you want to be buried?

# Telephone Programs

## Pharmacy Telephone Care System

The Pharmacy Telephone Care System is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may use it to:

- Order refills for current prescriptions **at least two weeks before** you run out.
- Check on a prescription.
- Talk to Pharmacy staff Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., and on Tuesday from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

To access the system, dial (239) 939-3939 or toll-free (888) 513-0045, extension 3052. Have your Social Security number ready. You will need the prescription number(s) to request refills. Please read the pamphlet "*Pharmacy Telephone Care System: The Key to Ordering Your Prescription Refills*" for instructions. Ask your VA provider or VA pharmacist for a copy. You may also order prescription refills by using the My Health\_eVet (MHV) website. There is more information on MHV on page 18 of this guide.

## Telephone Call Center

The Telephone Call Center is a patient information telephone line. Registered Nurses and other staff with special training are available to answer questions about your care, appointments, medications, and medical concerns. They will help you or contact your Primary Care Provider. Please leave your telephone number and the best time to call you back.

The Telephone Call Center is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday hours are 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. During these hours call (239) 939-3939 or toll-free (888) 513-0045. Follow the message prompts or use the telephone extensions on page 24 of this guide. After hours and holidays, call toll-free (877) 741-3400. The Telephone Call Center may save you a trip, but it is not an emergency service. **If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately!**

When should you call the Telephone Call Center?

- If you have questions about your eligibility for care
- If you have a problem or health concern, but no appointment

- If you have an appointment, but you want to see a doctor for a different problem
- If your next clinic appointment is several months away and you are having new problems or symptoms
- If you have questions about your medicines or have a reaction to them
- If you cannot keep your appointment or you need to change it

## Helpful Services

### **Billing (Insurance and Co-payments)**

The VA is required by Congress to bill private health insurance companies for non-service connected treatment and to charge co-payments for inpatient hospital care and treatments, outpatient care, extended care, and medications to certain veterans. Co-payment amounts are set annually by Congress. If you have questions, call the Customer Call Center toll-free at (866) 793-4591. CHAMPVA/Tricare questions are handled by the CHAMPVA Program Manager. Call toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 7464 for more information. There is no co-payment for the MOVE! program. See page 18 for more information on the MOVE! program.

### **Clinical Trials**

Clinical Trials are controlled experimental treatments for certain conditions and diseases which test newer therapies that may become the treatments of the future. Information about clinical trials is available from your Primary Care Team. The VA does not pay for clinical trials at non-VA facilities.

### **Details Office and National Cemetery Administration**

The Details Office is located at the Bay Pines VAHCS main campus in Bldg. 100, Room 1A-112. This office provides information on burial benefits and arrangements and is your contact between the Bay Pines VAHCS and the funeral home. You can call the Details Office Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their toll-free telephone number is (888) 820-0230, ext. 5550.

The Bay Pines National Cemetery Administration can answer your questions about memorials and burial in national cemeteries. Their toll-free telephone number is (888) 820-0230, ext. 5626.

## **Education of Patients and Family**

It is important that you take an active role in your healthcare so that you can receive the best care possible. The Bay Pines VAHCS offers many materials, activities, and programs on diabetes, cardiac care, weight management, stroke, oncology, smoking cessation, and other health topics. Tell your Primary Care Team if you would like more information.

## **Fisher House and Lodgetel (Temporary Lodging)**

The Bay Pines VAHCS has two types of temporary lodging programs to assist veterans and their families. To be eligible for either program, the veteran and/or family members must live more than 50 miles from the Bay Pines VAHCS main campus. During regular business hours Social Work Service reviews guests for these programs and makes referrals if eligible.

**Fisher House** is located on the grounds of the Bay Pines VAHCS main campus. It is a home away from home for families of acutely hospitalized veterans. The Fisher House has kitchen and laundry facilities. Guests must take care of their personal needs, maintain their own rooms, and keep common areas clean.

**Lodgetel** is an off-site program that provides temporary lodging for veterans who have problems with their medical appointments due to distance and time of day. The Lodgetel program is a self-care program and there are no clinical services available.

## **Hospice**

The Inpatient Hospice and Palliative Care Unit is located at the Bay Pines VAHCS main campus, Bldg. 100, in 5-C on the fifth floor. This unit serves veterans needing system management and comfort care in the final stages of a terminal illness. Physical, emotional, psycho-social, and spiritual support are provided in a home-like setting. Family and friends can be together 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Ask your Primary Care Team to contact the Hospice Coordinator for more information, or call Fort Myers OPC's Community Health Nurse.

## **Interpreters and Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

If you need an interpreter for hearing, vision, speech, cognitive deficits, foreign language, or limited English proficiency, tell your Primary Care

Team. Language interpretation is provided through *Interpretalk*. Fort Myers OPC has an *Interpretalk* telephone in the Health Administration Service (HAS) Office in Room 951. The CBOC's use private office speaker telephones for *Interpretalk*. For information on how to use this service, call the main HAS Office at (888) 820-0230, ext. 5678. This office is located at the main campus of the Bay Pines VAHCS in Bldg. 100, Room 1A-118.

### **MOVE! (Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere)**

MOVE! ([www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov)) is a weight management program. It focuses on nutrition, healthy behavior, and physical activity. Tell your Primary Care Team if you are interested in MOVE! There is no co-payment for this program.

### **My HealthVet (MHV)**

My HealthVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)) is a secure VA website that allows veterans to take an active part in their healthcare. You can use MHV to order prescription refills online for home delivery, list your military health history, and maintain food diaries and personal journals to record your blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight. By the end of 2008 you will be able to view your VA appointments, co-pay balances, and selected laboratory tests on this website. Secure online messaging will also be introduced before the end of 2008.

To use the newest features of MHV, you need to register online, watch a short video online, and then go to the Fort Myers OPC Release of Information (ROI) Office in Room 110 across from the Pharmacy. You need to have photo identification to complete the In-Person Authentication (IPA) process. The IPA process can also be completed at any of the CBOC's by going to the staff at the front desk. For more information on MHV or IPA, call toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5566, 5008, 7762, or 5497.

### **Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)**

The Bay Pines VAHCS has an OEF/OIF Office on its main campus in Bldg. 100, Room 1E-240. If you have concerns or questions about OEF/OIF, call (239) 939-3939 or toll-free (888) 513-0045, ext. 6188 or 6193, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5893 or 7541.

For information on eligibility or the transfer process, call the Eligibility Office toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4165 or 5684. It is located at the main Bay Pines VAHCS campus in Bldg. 100, Room 1E-109.

## **Patient Advocate**

The Fort Myers OPC strives to provide the best care possible in the most courteous and efficient manner to our veterans. The Patient Advocate staff is the official representative of the Bay Pines VAHCS Director. They are authorized to act on patient issues and complaints. They make sure your issues are addressed by the right people. The Patient Advocate Office is in Room 745. Their telephone number is (239) 939-3939, ext. 6213.

## **Release of Information (ROI)**

In order to better serve you, your Primary Care Team needs copies of the medical care you receive from non-VA facilities. ROI has the forms you need to request and/or send your medical information from and to outside medical facilities. ROI may charge for some services. ROI can also help you register for My Health\_eVet (MHV) and complete the MHV In-Person Authentication process for you. See page 18 for information on MHV.

The ROI Office at the Fort Myers OPC is in Room 110 across from the Pharmacy. Their telephone number is (239) 939-3939, ext. 6230.

## **Reporting Non-VA Emergency Care**

If you are admitted for non-VA emergency care, be sure to tell the non-VA Emergency Room and hospital facility that you are a veteran. You must report your non-VA inpatient admissions and/or emergency room visits within 72 hours to the Fee Services Unit at the Bay Pines VAHCS. Their telephone number is (727) 398-9438 or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5638.

You are required to sign a Release of Information at the non-VA facility to allow them to release your medical records to the VA. The Fee Services Unit at the Bay Pines VAHCS needs copies of your non-VA medical records before they can consider making payments. However, notifying the Bay Pines VAHCS and providing your medical records to them do NOT guarantee VA payment.

The mailing address for the Fee Service Unit is:

Bay Pines VAHCS  
Fee Service Unit (11FB)  
P.O. Box 5005  
Bay Pines, FL 33744

## **Telehealth Care**

The Telehealth Care program is designed to increase access to healthcare within the VA system. Through the use of technology such as computers, the Internet, and videophones, the Telehealth Care staff is able to monitor veterans in their homes who are unstable or who have medical conditions. This allows symptoms to be treated immediately and may reduce or prevent hospital time and costs. Admission into this program is by referral from your VA Primary Care Provider. If you feel you would benefit from this program, tell your Primary Care Provider, Case Manager, or nurse.

## **VA Vet Center**

The Fort Myers Vet Center provides readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in a combat zone. Services are also provided to veterans' families for military related issues. There is no cost for these services.

The Fort Myers Vet Center is located at 4100 Center Point Dr., Suite 204, Fort Myers. Their telephone number is (239) 479-4401.

## **Veterans Benefits Services**

The VA Regional Office (VARO) for the Veterans Benefits Administration is located on the Bay Pines VAHCS main campus. The Veterans Benefits Counselors at the Fort Myers OPC are not employees of the Veterans Administration. They are employed by the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs or the Disabled American Veterans.

Both the Veterans Benefits Counselors and the VARO can provide you with information about VA benefits and services, such as compensation and pension, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, and employment.

### **Disabled American Veterans**

Fort Myers OPC, Room 744  
(239) 939-3939, ext. 6405

### **Florida Department of Veterans Affairs**

Fort Myers OPC, Room 746  
(239) 939-3939, ext. 6331

## **VA Regional Office (VARO)**

9500 Bay Pines Blvd.  
Bay Pines, FL 33708  
Monday through Friday  
8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.  
(800) 827-1000

## **Voluntary Service**

Volunteers provide a personal touch by helping our veterans and staff in clinical and non-clinical areas. This service is a way to say thank-you to our veterans. Volunteers are needed at Fort Myers OPC and the CBOC's.

Voluntary Service accepts all donations for Fort Myers OPC and the CBOC's. This includes magazines, paperback books, clean clothing, and cash donations. A "Patient Needs List" identifies items that are needed. Money can be donated toward the purchase of these items. Hardback books, magazines older than 3 months, and used equipment are not accepted. Donation slips and guidelines are available in the Voluntary Service Office. For more information, call (239) 939-3939 or toll-free (888) 513-0045, ext. 6273.

## **Women's Health**

The Bay Pines VAHCS provides many services for women veterans. The Bay Pines VAHCS main campus offers a Breast Clinic, Gynecology services, and Maternity care. The Fort Myers OPC, Naples CBOC, and Port Charlotte CBOC's have Well Women's Clinics which offer annual women's health exams (breast exam, pap smear, and pelvic exam). If you would like an appointment for a Well Women's exam, ask your Primary Care Provider for a consult. If you have questions about the Women Veterans Health Program, call the Women Veterans Program Manager at the Bay Pines VAHCS toll-free at (888) 820-0230, ext. 4312.

## **Things to Know**

### **Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and Gambling**

Alcohol, illegal drugs, and gambling are not allowed at the Fort Myers OPC, the CBOC's, or on any VA property.

## **Fire/Disaster Drills**

Practice fire and disaster drills are held routinely. If you hear the fire alarm, stay calm and follow the VA staff instructions.

## **Homeland Security**

Homeland Security guidelines require certain actions to protect you. This includes limiting access to the VA grounds and buildings. You may be asked to show identification and to state the reason for your visit before you are allowed to enter onto VA property.

## **Information Desks**

The Information Desk is located at the Front Entrance of the Fort Myers OPC. Volunteers are available during normal business hours to help you with information about the Fort Myers OPC and community resources, including bus schedules, restaurants, and motels.

## **Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found Office is located in the Travel Office at the Fort Myers OPC in Room 950. You are responsible for your belongings while at the Fort Myers OPC and the CBOC's.

## **Parking Lots**

Visitor Parking Lots are located directly in front of the Fort Myers OPC with handicapped spaces clearly marked. Always lock your car.

## **Pets**

Pets are not allowed on VA property, except for service animals such as seeing-eye dogs. Do not leave pets in your car.

## **Smoking**

The Fort Myers OPC and the CBOC's are smoke-free facilities. **Smoking is not allowed inside any building.** Designated smoking areas are located outside the buildings at each facility.

## Telephones/Cell Phones



There is a pay telephone located near the Radiology Department, Room 301. Do not use cell phones inside the Fort Myers OPC and CBOC's as cell phones can interfere with vital biomedical and patient care equipment.

## Vending Machine Area

At the Fort Myers OPC, vending machines with drink and food selections are located in the Canteen area. Patio seating is available there.

## Weapons

For your safety and the safety of others, no weapons of any kind are permitted on VA property. People entering buildings at the Fort Myers OPC must consent to an inspection of all packages. Refusing to allow inspection of packages can result in denial of entry onto VA property.

## Emergency, Poison, Suicide, and Crisis Numbers

**If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately!**

Call Poison Control at (800) 222-1222 if you have a poison emergency.

If you think you want to hurt or kill yourself, call for help before it is too late!

**The Suicide and Crisis Hotline telephone numbers are:**

- **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** (800) 273-TALK (8255)
- **Charlotte County:** (941) 575-0222 (Charlotte Behavioral Health)
- **Collier County:** (239) 455-8500 (David Lawrence Center)
- **Lee County:** (239) 275-4242 (Vista Behavioral Crisis Services)
- **The National Hopeline:** (800) SUICIDE (784-2433)

These services are available to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you need help, please call them immediately!

Suicide prevention websites:

[www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

[www.agingcarefl.org/aging/suicide\\_prev/Resources](http://www.agingcarefl.org/aging/suicide_prev/Resources)

# Telephone Directory for Fort Myers OPC



**If you want to contact these departments  
at the Fort Myers OPC, call (239) 939-3939  
or toll-free: (888) 513-0045  
and dial these extensions:**

Case Manager/Nursing .....	3051
Community Health Nursing .....	6470
Dental Clinic.....	6320 or 6321
Enrollment Questions.....	6302 or 6303
Laboratory.....	6224
Mental Health Clinic .....	6312
OEF/OIF Case Managers .....	6188 or 6193
Patient Advocate.....	6213
Pharmacy.....	3052
Prescription Refills .....	7098
Prosthetics .....	6327
Radiology .....	6250
Release of Information.....	6230
Scheduling Desk.....	3050
Travel.....	6215
Voluntary Service.....	6273

